

Sarah Saunders

at Black Shuck Distillery



Investing in Leaders in Business

Sarah Saunder's strategic vision has enabled this business to transform into a modern distillery and year-round tourist attraction



Black Shuck Distillery exemplifies outstanding leadership through Sarah Saunders' visionary strategic direction. What began 13 years ago as a family project to teach life skills to three teenage children has developed into one of North Norfolk's most distinctive businesses. In their first year, while picking sloes in the North Norfolk countryside, Sarah told her children about the Black Shuck legend - the story her father had shared many times, where smugglers used this myth to keep locals indoors while moving illegal cargo. When the initial 300 bottles of sloe gin sold out within weeks, Sarah recognised an untapped market. A poor sloe harvest that year immediately led to a need to diversify and, under Sarah's guidance, Black Shuck expanded from just 300 bottles of sloe gin to becoming a nationally well respected distiller with over 20 different product lines.

Sarah's visionary leadership is evident throughout the new facility, which now comprises a dual-purpose set of buildings. She has expanded the operation to include not only a distillery but also a visitor attraction. Black Shuck now offers factory tours, tastings, and a shopping experience. The brand itself reflects their family-focused vision - daughter Leanne designed their now-iconic logo, with the original paper still displayed at the distillery, and Sarah and husband Patrick are very much a close team. The REPF grant from North Norfolk District Council helped to make the sizeable investment into the new premises viable, and the transformation was completed in just five months from the start of construction to opening their new doors!

Sarah leads community engagement by attracting hundreds of visitors each week—75% from outside Norfolk—which has broadened the reach of North Norfolk Black Shuck. She promotes local attractions and introduces themed events and coach trips to improve the visitor experience. Her approach preserves an ancient legend while growing a successful business that delivers both commercial and cultural value.

“The tourist attraction experience side would not have been possible without the funding. We are now welcoming hundreds of visitors to the distillery every week, which is great for the local economy.”

Sarah Saunders,
Black Shuck Distillery

Black Shuck Distillery, North Norfolk



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